

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
**A Public School - 130K2**

	<b>Charter</b>	<b>Title 1</b>	<b>Magnet</b>	<b>Choice</b>
School Type (Public Schools):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Principal: Mr. Justin Hunt

Official School Name: Harding Charter Preparatory High School

School Mailing Address: 3333 North Shartel Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118-7277

County: Oklahoma State School Code Number\*: 55 E008 978

Telephone: (405) 528-0562 E-mail: jhunt@hardingcharterprep.org

Fax: (405) 556-5063 Web site/URL: http://www.hardingcharterprep.org/

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Mr. Justin Hunt Superintendent e-mail: jhunt@hardingcharterprep.org

District Name: District Phone: (405) 528-0562

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Wayne Epperson

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
0 Middle/Junior high schools  
1 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
1 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 5757

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Urban or large central city
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	72	55	127
10	67	61	128
11	44	72	116
12	43	59	102
Total in Applying School:			473

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 3 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
4 % Asian  
31 % Black or African American  
17 % Hispanic or Latino  
2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
42 % White  
1 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 3%  
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	0
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	13
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	13
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	469
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.03
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 3%  
Total number of ELL students in the school: 13  
Number of non-English languages represented: 3  
Specify non-English languages:

Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 48%

Total number of students who qualify: 226

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 5%

Total number of students served: 24

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>30</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>40</u>	<u>0</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

14:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	94%	95%	94%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size:	<u>81</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>87%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>12%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>1%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Harding Charter Preparatory High School, founded in 2003, is a dream come true for many students and their families in inner Oklahoma City: a free, public, college-preparatory education. Using a 1920s-building abandoned by the local school district, Harding's founders created a mission to "provide each student with an academically challenging, educational experience through an Advanced Placement curriculum, which will prepare graduates for success at a four-year university."

Harding began with 65 students and eight staff members not quite 10 years ago. Today, the school's success – recognized both locally and nationally – has generated such high demand that Harding held its first lottery in March 2012, in which more than 180 prospective freshmen applied for 135 openings. The cheers and tears were not unlike those seen in the documentary film, *Waiting for Superman*.

The reasons for the success of Harding and its student body of nearly 500 are many, but the most important one is culture, buttressed by its Advanced Placement curriculum. It starts the first day each student is personally enrolled by an administrator, who does not ask, "Are you going to college?" **but** "Where do you want to go to college?" That same day every student enrolls in either Pre AP or AP classes for four years. Harding students also take a 4 by 4 curriculum — math, English, science and history -- for four years. Doing so raises expectations that students will meet the challenge.

Harding Charter Prep, a non-selective public school, is open to any student who lives in the Oklahoma City School District and thus reflects the diversity of a metropolitan area of 1.2 million people; students of color represent 58 percent of Harding's population. Two-thirds of Harding's students are first generation college students. As a result, many have trouble envisioning themselves on a college campus, much less in a college classroom. Some Harding students not only are the first in their family to attend college but also are the first to graduate from an American high school.

To reach the college goal, every senior is enrolled in a Capstone class, designed to guide students through the college application process. In the class, students research and apply to at least three colleges/universities and apply for eight scholarships by December 1. The seniors also review the submittal process of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. A FAFSA evening program is available for parents, who are strongly encouraged to attend. During the spring semester, Capstone students mentor four hours weekly for six weeks in a career they might pursue. The culmination of this mentoring is a mentorship showcase, where students present their experience to parents, peers and mentors.

Harding's mission to develop seniors into students who are ready for the challenges of college begins four years earlier, as freshmen. From day one the school's all AP curriculum places strong emphasis on reading, writing, and analysis across all disciplines. Faculty members nurture collaborative problem solving and writing assignments in every class, including physical education. Students who need help attend faculty run tutoring sessions after school and on Saturdays.

The AP curriculum at Harding includes English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, European History, U.S. History, U.S. Government, Calculus, Statistics, Physics, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Biology, French, Spanish, Latin, Studio Art.

As quoted by Oklahoma Governor, "Harding Charter Preparatory High School is an example of a great school." The results are impressive. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Harding the No. 1 high school in Oklahoma in 2011 and 2012. *Newsweek* ranked Harding as ninth nationally on its Transformative Schools Ranking in 2012; the magazine has ranked Harding among the top 150 schools nationally the past three years.

In Oklahoma, Harding's Academic Performance Index has been nearly perfect over the past five years, when data was reported with the first graduating class. This No Child Left Behind data graded schools in Oklahoma on a 1500 point scale. Harding had an API score of 1371 in 2008, 1484 in 2009, 1421 in 2010 and 1435 in 2011. In 2012, the state of Oklahoma switched to an A-F grading scale. Harding Charter Prep received a 4.0 GPA, earning an A+ -- one of only a handful of schools in the state. In 2012 Harding administered 457 Advanced Placement tests to more than 200 students in grades 10-12. One percent of all the AP tests given in the entire state of Oklahoma were administered at Harding Charter Prep and 2 percent of all students in Oklahoma who passed AP exams were from Harding.

But the most important statistic of all is **98**. Since the first graduating class in 2007, 98 percent of Harding's students have graduated from the school and gone on to college.



## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

A. Harding Charter Prep administers a variety of standardized tests in order to assess educational progress. These tests include End-of-Instruction state tests, Advanced Placement tests, ACT scores, PSAT and PLAN scores. Key initiatives introduced internally have contributed to the continuing success, including AVID teaching strategies school-wide, vertical and horizontal team collaboration led by empowered teacher-leaders, Advanced Placement subject professional development devoted to teachers collaboration, strong emphasis on reading and writing, and data-driven analysis of student results. End-of-Instruction high school tests (EOI) are criterion-referenced tests that are aligned with the Oklahoma's Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS). These are administered to all Oklahoma students at the completion of Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, English II, English III, U.S. History, and Biology coursework. Scores of "Proficient" and "Advanced" meet the minimum standards on the EOI tests, with additional scoring at "Limited Knowledge" and "Unsatisfactory." For accountability purposes, scores are reported for all regular students. Harding Charter Preparatory High Schools' results in English III have been nearly perfect from 93% passing in 2008 to 100% passing in 2012. Algebra I EOI scores have experienced similar levels of Advanced and Proficient scores as Harding's pass rate for Algebra I was a 100% in 2012. Harding Charter Prep's standard is nothing less than academic excellence and college preparation.

B. Harding students demonstrate mastery in English II and English III EOI testing, with a pass rate of over 93% or better over the last five years in English II. Harding students testing in English III achieved a 100% pass rate. In Algebra I Harding students continue to outperform students in the Oklahoma City Public School District (OKCPS). Students in OKCPS achieved a 55% pass rate on the Algebra I EOI while Harding in the same district had a 100% pass rate in Algebra I last year. Significant increases in the English II pass rate of several subgroups were seen, with African American students (about 34% of the population) going from 74% passing in 2008 to 89% pass rate in 2012. In EOI Algebra I testing, Harding Charter Preparatory High School led the state in 2012 with a 100% pass rate, up from 91% in 2008. Harding Charter Prep is an anomaly among public schools in the state when test score data for minority students, low socio-economic students, and special education students are observed. These student group pass rates are comparative to the rest of the student population at Harding if not better as is the case for special education. In 2012 Harding had a 100% pass rate on all Oklahoma Modified Alternate Assessment Program testing. Minority and low socio-economic students pass rates have been 90% or better on all state testing. Harding students' pass rate has consistently been among the highest in the state. The success that all students experience on standardized state testing is attributed to Harding's emphasis on reading and writing across all subjects areas. Harding Charter Prep provides many opportunities to involve all students in college preparatory classes which increase the pass rate of students with learning differences and better prepares all students for the new Common Core initiatives which focus on reading and writing. In addition, an After School Study Program and a Saturday School Study Program assists struggling students with free tutoring, led by four core subject area certified English, math, science, and history teachers. As well as a required Summer Reading program, which is assigned to all students and has proved effective in helping students stay current and successful while bridging the gap during the summer months students are out of school. Oklahoma schools are also assessed on their student attendance, dropout rates, and graduation rates. Harding Charter Preparatory High School consistently graduates 100% of its senior class and has a zero percent dropout rate since 2008. Attendance rates are consistently well above the state average at 96%. In Oklahoma academic excellence is assessed by analyzing ACT scores, percent of students participating in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and college remediation rates in reading and math which contribute to 10% of the total assessment or Academic Performance Index (API). Harding Charter Prep's API score has been among the state's highest at 1371 in 2008 and a 1435 in 2011. The AP program credit has scored a perfect 1500 on API (No Child Left Behind measure) for the last four years. Two-percent of all Advanced Placement tests administered in the

state of Oklahoma were accomplished at Harding, a school of 500 students. One-percent of all students in Oklahoma who took Advanced Placement tests were from Harding. Additionally, nearly 99% of Harding Charter Prep's seniors take the ACT, the average ACT score was 22.4 in 2011, compared to the state average of 20.5 and the national average at 21.1.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

A. Harding Charter Preparatory High School utilizes data-driven decision-making in teaching, assessment, leadership, and organizational effectiveness. Leadership is strongly committed to high achievement for all students and administrators work with teachers to actively analyze and interpret assessment results for school improvement. The bottom line to every decision is: "How is this going to positively impact student learning?" The Advanced Placement teachers annually examine student results and instructional planning reports from CollegeBoard, and each teacher sets goals to increase student participation and success. All teachers collaborate in vertical subject teams to focus on improved student learning. At the beginning of the school year, administrators and teachers carefully analyze the results from Oklahoma End-of-Instruction tests by subject, by standard, and by teacher. The empowered vertical and horizontal teacher led bi-monthly meetings set and attain goals for improving student learning. The vertical and horizontal teams teachers collaborate on instructional strategies, create common assessments, analyze chapter and benchmark results, and share educational best practices. For example, math teams evaluate the results of a chapter test, identify any weaknesses, and spiral back in instruction and practice on weak concepts through the next chapter. Exams that measure cumulative subject knowledge and process skills are administered in all required social studies, math, and science courses. Principals and counselors use eighth grade criterion-referenced state test results to identify any entering ninth grade students who lack grade-level mastery in reading and math. If math skills are deficient, the student is enrolled in the Algebra I Summer Bridge Program, where Algebra I skills typically increase. All students are expected to master Algebra I by the end of the ninth grade, so those students lacking math skills are placed in a math support class that combines tutoring for Algebra I with the highly qualified Algebra I teacher that identifies and remediates any weaknesses in basic math skills. A summer PSAT Team tutors students during the summer to identify students who can improve their test score for National Merit qualifications. AVID teacher meetings occur once a month where they hear student testimonials, discuss student achievement, AVID methodologies, and college preparation for the student in the middle. While most schools focus on the high performing students through their gifted programs and their low performing students through remediation programs, they neglect the middle level students. Harding focuses on the students in the middle by incorporating AVID teaching strategies throughout the entire school.

B. Celebrations of success have taken on various forms at Harding Charter Preparatory High School, including newsletters mailed, parent e-mailed blasts, power point presentations to various stakeholder groups, assembly programs, school website, and state and national newspapers. As this relatively young high school began to assert itself academically, it was important to develop the proper mind-set. The journey to carry out the mission that Harding Charter Preparatory High School would symbolize academic excellence began at the grass roots among students, teachers, and parents, and in time, spread to the community at large. Every opportunity and informational vehicle was utilized to communicate this message. This sense of expectation for achievement became the norm for all students. As Harding's mission was shared, the message became pervasive, with each student understanding the expectation of furthering the Harding academic reputation. The communication of this process became more apparent. Students, teachers, and parents became major stakeholders with tremendous pride and enthusiasm. As the academic reputation of the school became more apparent, the communication trail became more widespread, taking on a life of its own. ACT, SAT, and PSAT scores, National Merit, college remediation rates, EOI Exam scores, state academic performance scores (API), all became part of the vernacular used by school staff to point to positive academic results. These various test results are utilized to measure and substantiate progress and to set future goals. Seniors look with anticipation at the commencement exercise to hear the principal announce scholarship totals, and this has become a source of pride for each succeeding class. Class academic competition serves as a healthy source of school spirit

and pride. Harding's accomplishments are published at the end of each school year to celebrate the achievement of students and the school at large. This publication serves as a reminder of the spirit of excellence of this graduating class, but also as a road map for future classes.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Harding shares lessons with many constituents which has ranged from countries abroad, other state delegations, and in-state school district leaders. These visits have included the Thailand Ministry of Science and Technology and the Raleigh, North Carolina Chamber of Commerce, regarding best practices at Harding. During interactive sessions with the visitors, Harding administrators and selected teachers discussed the intricacies of a high functioning charter school and what works best for students to succeed. Also, the Mobile, Alabama Chamber of Commerce visited Harding to discuss implementation of charter schools in Alabama. The visit with Harding by the Mobile officials was recommended by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. The Leadership of Oklahoma City's Education Committee visited to discuss the Oklahoma State Department of Education's newly adopted A-F grading system (Harding received a perfect 4.0 A+ grade). Additionally, the superintendent from Stidham Public Schools, in rural southeastern Oklahoma, visited Harding due to his interest in Harding's best practices.

Questions from these various groups ranged from how Harding provides rigor and high expectations through the Advanced Placement curriculum, methods of encouraging parental involvement, and the implementation and maintenance of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. Harding, which introduced AVID to Oklahoma in 2003, has hosted many day long AVID sessions with educators from across the United States. Harding's AVID program is a model to Oklahoma schools that are considering adoption of the AVID philosophy.

Additionally, Harding teachers showcase our curriculum and best practices by leading weekend workshops for the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board, networking with a national group of Russian teachers, reading AP tests, and networking with Tinker Air Force Base to enhance our science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) program.

Harding shares best practices while maintaining an attitude of continuous improvement and learning from others. For example, AVID provides great professional development as Harding sends six to 10 teachers annually to AVID's Summer Institute. Harding's head principal was selected by AVID to lead professional development at the institute. Harding also is active in the Oklahoma Charter School Association by meeting monthly to discuss best practices, current legislation topics, as well as laws and regulations in regards to charter schools.

One of Harding's goals is that its best practices and high standards will be a catalyst for change in Oklahoma. We believe more schools are incorporating AVID and AP classes because of the Harding example.

### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

The engagement with families begins the minute students apply to attend Harding Charter Prep. Incoming students sign an agreement to volunteer a minimum of 30 hours a year to their community. Meantime, parents or guardians also sign a contract agreeing to complete 25 hours of service to the school during the academic year. Harding, with a limited maintenance staff, hosts a "Parent Work Day" the first Saturday of every month, where parents do such chores as disinfect classrooms, replace ceiling tiles, paint, mow, and landscape. On these mornings parents meet administrators, faculty, and other parents in an environment of commonality. Students accompany their parents to the workdays.

Harding's Parent Organization meets monthly, to identify needs that must be fixed. Through its fundraising efforts the Parent Organization has purchased and installed blinds for every window in the school, purchased Promethean boards, and provided countless staff appreciation breakfasts and lunches.

The Parent Organization also awards two senior scholarships every year. Meantime, the school administration recognized Hispanic parent participation was lacking due to the language barrier. As a result, administrators formed the Hispanic Parent Organization to work with the regularly scheduled Parent Organization meetings. A bilingual parent is present to translate.

Harding's Governance Board consists of community members, alumni, and parents, who meet monthly to decide policy and procedures in areas of finance, enrollment, curriculum, and staffing. Each grade level has two parent representatives on this board.

Harding utilizes many strategies to foster student success and improvement which extends into Oklahoma City and beyond. These include a partnership with the Dean McGee Eye Institute, which enables all new students to have vision testing every fall for free and, if needed, glasses are provided free of charge. Also, there is a mentoring program with Chesapeake Energy Corporation employees. These employees come to Harding every week to meet with students who need role models in their lives. Additionally, Harding faculty participates in a campaign with the United Way of Metro Oklahoma City which runs concurrently with the United Way's annual drive every fall. Finally, Harding sponsors an annual event, known as "Eagle Week," which allows students to raise funds for the charity of its choice. These funds have purchased a water well in an African country and provided shoes and toys at Christmas for families in poverty. Other community partnerships have ranged from bringing speakers to classrooms to donations of much needed landscaping supplies.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

Harding Charter Preparatory High School was created to allow all students access to a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum, with Advanced Placement (AP) classes/tests and ultimately college credit being the goal. Harding students know they will have more homework than their peers at other schools, will be forced to think analytically, and will participate in only Pre AP and AP classes. Harding also requires a 4 X 4 curriculum (four years of math, English, science and history) and requires 28 credits to graduate – well above the Oklahoma state minimum requirement of 23. The 16 AP courses start in the student's sophomore year. Freshmen courses consist of either Pre-AP or the Honors level.

Examples per department:

In the English department, the AP curriculum starts in junior year with AP English Language and transitions to senior year being AP English Literature.

In the history department, the AP curriculum starts sophomore year with AP European History, AP U.S. History junior year, and AP Government during senior year.

In the mathematics department, there is a variance in the curriculum. Harding does not have a specified feeder middle school; students enroll from 15 to 20 different middle schools each year. Each student who enrolls is on a different track mathematically. Our freshmen students will start in Pre-AP Algebra I, Pre-AP Geometry, or Pre-AP Algebra II. Harding also has special cases where some freshmen students are enrolled in both Pre-AP Geometry and Pre-AP Algebra II in order to maintain the progress needed to take an AP mathematics course. Juniors will take Pre-AP Calculus and Trigonometry and seniors have the option of three different courses: AP Calculus, AP Statistics, or College Algebra. College Board offers a wide variety of Advanced Placement mathematics and science courses, and Harding attempts to provide juniors and seniors the leverage to select which course they see best fits their career goals and aspirations.

The science department begins with freshmen enrolling in Pre-AP Conceptual Physics, sophomores enroll in Pre-AP Chemistry, and juniors enroll in Pre-AP Biology. Seniors have a choice between AP Chemistry, AP Environmental, and AP Biology. Harding also offers a few science electives students to take in addition to their core classes; the electives include Human Anatomy/Physiology and Botany/Zoology.

In the world language department, Harding requires each student to take at least two years of the same world language. Students may choose from five different world languages: French, German, Latin, Spanish and Russian. French, Latin, and Spanish all reach the AP level. Since students come from a variety of middle school world language classes, entering freshmen may take a world language placement test the spring of their eighth-grade year; their level of enrollment will be based on this test outcome. Harding also has two classes for students whose native language is Spanish. The Spanish for Native Speakers course primarily emphasizes the combination of speaking and writing to expedite the process of taking the AP Spanish test.

In addition to the full schedule of AP courses offered at Harding, there is a robust offering of electives. Harding has an extensive Fine Arts Department while offering two sections of art, color and design, AP Studio Art, two sections of painting, two sections of photography, two sections of vocal music, band, orchestra, four sections of drama, and two sections of speech and debate.

Finally, Harding requires students to take Health, Physical Education, and Computer Applications before graduation in order to educate the whole child. Harding believes students should be educated about

healthy lifestyles and choices, students need to live active lifestyles, and with the advancing of technology it is vital that students are proficient with technology.

## **2. Reading/English:**

The English curriculum at Harding Charter Preparatory High School is Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement. All students take Pre-AP English I and II, then move to Advanced Placement English Language and Composition and Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition their junior and senior years. Our curriculum emphasizes reading and writing, both as means of learning (note taking, journaling) and expression (essay writing). Starting freshman year, students read and take notes on or annotate their reading, and write regularly, both in and out of class. The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading) methodology is the foundation of what we do. We use many AVID strategies in our classes: Cornell Notes, binders, Socratic Seminars, Philosophical Chairs, Jigsawing, and level questioning. Both Jigsawing and level questioning help below grade level readers understand challenging material by breaking it up into manageable sections and allowing them to engage it with peer support. In addition, we employ close reading strategies to encourage students to read for detail and to realize how even single words and phrases can affect the whole. Students write a research paper every year, on literary topics sophomore and senior years, and on more current event/history related topics freshman and junior years.

Vertical alignment is key to the English department's success. When the school started ten years ago, each English course was designed to grow from the preceding one. The department levels the playing field in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, introducing Cornell Notes, binders, Jane Schaffer writing concepts, Modern Language Association format and style. These fundamentals stay with students throughout the four years as they study world literature their sophomore year, rhetoric and American literature their junior year, and British and Western literature their senior year. In addition, Harding offers a creative writing elective for juniors and seniors. The faculty regularly attends both AVID and Advanced Placement workshops and conferences, and continues to refresh and renew the curriculum with the materials and ideas learned at these in-services.

## **3. Mathematics:**

Following the mission of the school, the math department incorporates strategies from other curriculum areas such as research papers, writing assignments and oral presentation to solidify that mathematical concepts are a part of everyday life in every subject. Harding targets different skill levels of students by utilizing a unique mathematical path. Administrators and math faculty collaborate to ensure students are enrolled in the correct math class, which not only challenges but complements their skill set. Incoming freshmen enrolled in algebra take a placement test in the spring before they arrive at Harding. If the test results find a student weak in the skills necessary to enter the Pre-AP Algebra 1 course, then the student has the opportunity to attend a basic Algebra Summer Bridge program to close the gap. In Pre-AP Algebra 1 students engage in group work, which helps students learn better by teaching others. Students then transition to Pre-AP Geometry, where they interact in various educational learning activities such as group work, use of "manipulatives," geometric-shaped objects, Smart Board exercises and research projects, which show real world application. Following Pre-AP Geometry students enroll in Pre-AP Algebra II where they revisit and build upon learned skills from Pre-AP Algebra 1, such as advanced linear functions as well as quadratics. Upon completion of Pre-AP Algebra II students can either enter Pre-AP Calculus and Trigonometry or college algebra. AP Calculus or AP Statistics are offered for those students who entered Harding with math credits from middle school.

Harding math teachers understand the reading and writing culture of the school, and thus their classes are more than just mathematical equations and theorems. Students graduate from Harding with the competency to write a five-page college math paper, through creative use of technology and with support from strong community partnerships, such as guest speakers and the purchase of classroom sets of calculators and Promethium boards.

The teaching of foundational skills is reinforced by limiting the use of calculators as a “crutch,” allowing Harding math students to flourish in the classroom as they progress to college.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

One of the greatest challenges in education is increasing the science and math literacy of children. Over the years, educators have begun diversifying their teaching towards what the student plans to major in college. Unfortunately, this narrowed approach to math and science curriculum causes the advanced courses in these subject areas, which are inseparable from each other, to suffer from lower enrollment. Compounding the situation are pre-high school generalizations and fears that have been nursed over the years with comments such as, “I am not good at science”. This statement is false. As humans and thinkers, all of us are, “good at science”; we just might not have been steered in the right direction.

Instead of applying this approach, Harding Charter Prep requires our students to take four years of science and they take an AP class as their fourth science course. Harding’s science department teaches scientific concepts through the language of mathematics. During the four years, our number one goal is to nurture critical thinking skills through laboratory investigation, inquiry-based problem solving, and cooperative data analysis, which will not only benefit them in their next science course but also throughout their educational career and foster life-long learning. In order to reach this goal, Harding emphasizes the importance of basic skills that are utilized in all science courses and levels. It is imperative that students have a strong ability to model difficult concepts, be able to create data representations through charts and graphs, and most importantly, be able to find patterns and correlations through both extrapolation and interpolation. With this method in mind, Harding starts freshman year with an algebra-based physics course where students are immediately exposed to the fundamentals of mathematics and scientific investigation that are necessary to begin this journey. Conceptual Physics lays the foundation for their transition to Chemistry, Biology, and eventually the AP science of their choice their senior year.

Our success is based on the fact that our students take four years of rigorous Pre-AP and AP science courses so that they are exposed to all branches of the sciences, including physical, biological, and environmental. Over the course of four years, students are able to increase their scientific awareness, strengthen their critical thinking skills, and gain the ability to conduct thorough data analysis. With any luck, this approach opens the window to discovery that will benefit them beyond high school.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

Students need differentiated instruction in order to be successful. Harding has a very diverse student population; therefore differentiated instruction is a key component to our success. Harding Charter Prep utilizes the strategies and methodologies of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) to address all learning styles. It is crucial at our majority minority school, where more than 60 percent of the students are the first generation in their families to attend college.

AVID curriculum is driven by the WICOR method: writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading. AVID’s instructional methods include instructing all students on how to take Cornell notes; assisting students with organizational skills, such as requiring all students to use three-ring binders for each class; and introducing use of interactive notebooks. An interactive notebook with a table of contents contains all of the students’ notes, homework and worksheets. Higher level thinking is stressed in students’ notes, student assessments (80 percent of the assessments are writing components), and when teachers across the curriculum use Socratic Seminars to help students with all learning styles understand concepts. Cooperative learning, small group projects, jigsawing and close readings are also instructional practices used throughout the curriculum.

Harding’s instructional methods center on reading and writing in every classroom, with instruction differentiated to meet all learning styles. For example, standardized tests’ data showed Harding students

were doing poorly when analyzing graphs and charts. To combat this weakness all curriculum areas incorporated chart and graph analysis on a weekly basis.

Harding students are required to take a computer applications class. Students have access to the Media Center, which contains 28 computers and two mobile computer labs that have 15 net books each. Harding also has a journalism lab where newspaper, yearbook, web design and journalism classes utilize computers including doing pod casts. Harding's science lab consists of 12 computers, to make learning science as interactive as possible. Harding teacher's embrace new educational ideas when they feel their students will reap the rewards as seen with "Flipped Instruction." Flipped instruction which occurs in the freshmen Conceptual Physics class is where a teacher videos the lesson; students watch the video at home and then work the problems in class while the teacher is present for the entire period to address any student questions. Thanks to a generous donor, teachers were equipped with iPads in early 2013 to prepare for the day that we transition to e-textbooks.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Harding Charter Prep strongly believes that educational professional growth is vitally important to the academic achievement of students. Student achievement is a driving factor when it comes to the selection of professional development activities for educators. Harding has a rather unique approach to professional development. Educators are strongly encouraged to attend AP conferences in the subject area they teach. During these AP conferences, educators learn innovative methods to diversify subject matter and engage students. The AP conferences directly align with the academic standards at Harding since it is an all AP school. Another avenue of professional development is the AVID Summer Institute. Every summer, Harding sends eight to ten of its educators—teachers, principals and counselors to the AVID Summer Institute where they learn innovative AVID strategies and methodologies, which are used school-wide. The three day AVID Summer Institute is viewed by the administration as a "retreat" for planning, implementing policy and sharing teaching strategies as well as participant "bonding" for a cohesive faculty. Internally, Harding provides a unique professional development to its entire faculty. In lieu of hiring expensive outsiders to present, Harding has the highly qualified staff, which attended the AVID Summer Institutes and the AP conferences, share "Best Practices" they learned with fellow faculty members on a monthly basis at monthly faculty meetings. This internal professional development method develops and empowers teacher leaders. Since our faculty shares best practices internally this eliminates the familiar complaint known among educators nationwide of spending a large sum of money on an outsider when the talent and knowledge lies within the district. Harding's belief is that teachers learn from each other about best practices since there is a consistent school-wide curricular approach. Each faculty member has a notebook where these Best Practice ideas are filed for easy reference. Harding's philosophy on professional development is that each individual educator has room for improvement. Harding educators have the freedom to attend conferences of their choice in areas, dealing with subject where they seek improvement. A new faculty member's professional development begins when Harding administrators immerse them in a two-day pre-school workshop, exposing them to the school's vision, mission and teaching methodology enabling these teachers to become a part of the Harding culture. The school's philosophical vision has been that there is always room for professional growth in the areas of teaching, management, and leadership.

## **7. School Leadership:**

Research indicates that effective school leadership is vital for the cultivation of a systemic school philosophy which embodies the value of continuous improvement and life-long learning for faculty and students. The conceptual model of charter schools permits for unique leadership structures.

At Harding the principal's role is a hybrid between a public school superintendent and principal. The principal performs the tasks of state reporting, financials, community and stakeholder relationships, policy and procedure management, and facility management; this is similar to a traditional public school



superintendent in Oklahoma. Additionally, the principal is involved in student and parent issues, and answers to Harding's governance board.

The school has two assistant principals; their structural duties include one supervising the ninth and tenth grades and other the eleventh and twelfth grades. The assistant principals handle various tasks such as discipline, attendance, state-mandated test coordination, direction of athletic activities, maintenance of policies and procedures, and day-to-day student and parent issues. It is not uncommon for a Harding administrator to carry a broom, mop or tools in order to resolve a situation or issue that arises. Harding administrators handle multiple roles in part because of a lack of funding for improvements and maintenance in a building opened in the 1920s.

The expectation of excellence, which is high for all students, transcends to high expectations of every staff member as well. The principal holds lunch-time departmental chairperson meetings weekly, empowers those curriculum leaders to experiment with new technology and new teaching strategies, and listens to possible solutions to issues before they become bigger challenges. Harding's leadership focuses on developing college-bound students and good citizens by holding students accountable for minor disciplinary issues, such as uniform infractions, in order to deter more serious offenses. This leadership philosophy concerning behavioral expectations has a proven track record since Harding does not have serious discipline issues and can focus on instruction.

Instructional leadership is paramount at Harding and time spent learning is vital to the school's success. As a result, out-of-class time for assemblies and field trips are kept to a minimum. This is reflected in attaining more than the state-minimum instructional hours for the year. Oklahoma requires 1,080 instructional hours. Harding has 1,206 instructional hours, calculating to 18 more instructional days than the state minimum. It is the philosophy of school leadership that the student is most important, and thus is reflected in more dollars and time spent on instruction.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 10 Test: English II End of Instruction

Edition/Publication Year: 2007 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	91	97	89	91	89
Advanced	47	51	62	41	73
Number of students tested	135	114	97	104	85
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	6	6	4	3	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	100	100	100	100	100
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	88	95	96	94	82
Advanced	40	47	57	28	62
Number of students tested	50	38	56	32	34
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	85	98	94	92	79
Advanced	30	48	47	29	50
Number of students tested	40	44	34	24	24
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	84	93	100	100	Masked
Advanced	32	13	63	42	Masked
Number of students tested	25	15	11	12	7
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	6	4	3	1
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Caucasian</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	97	97	93	100	98
Advanced	55	53	81	52	84
Number of students tested	89	62	44	54	49
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 9 Test: Algebra I End of Instruction

Edition/Publication Year: 2006 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	98	93	94	88	72
Advanced	71	52	34	60	19
Number of students tested	52	71	62	50	85
Percent of total students tested	100	95	95	95	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	5			4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	100	100			100
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	Masked	96	88	56
Advanced	77	Masked	29	63	11
Number of students tested	31	4	24	16	27
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	100	92	92	82	59
Advanced	65	36	25	64	13
Number of students tested	17	25	24	11	32
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	93	90	91	Masked	Masked
Advanced	67	50	37	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	15	20	11	6	9
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	Masked	Masked			Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked			Masked
Number of students tested	3	5			4
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient/Advanced		Masked			Masked
Advanced		Masked			Masked
Number of students tested		1			1
<b>6. Caucasian</b>					
Proficient/Advanced	97	93	96	100	81
Advanced	77	61	42	71	22
Number of students tested	31	44	24	28	36
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

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